

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions of the claims in the present application:

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a timestamp for data in a database system, the database system operating in accordance with a database schema, the method comprising:

providing a table in the database system, the table including a plurality of rows of data;

providing a hidden timestamp column in the table of the database system, the hidden timestamp column including a timestamp value for each row of data in the table, the timestamp value indicating a last time a corresponding row of data in the table was previously modified, wherein the hidden timestamp column does not appear in the database schema by default and exposes the timestamp value for a given row of data in the table only to a query that calls the timestamp column by name;

receiving a query from an application to obtain a timestamp value from the hidden timestamp column, the query calling the timestamp column by name; and  
in response to the query, the hidden timestamp column returning the timestamp value to the application for use by the application,

wherein the application uses the returned timestamp value ~~from the hidden timestamp column~~ for controlling a locking scheme associated with recording data updates in the database system wherein the locking scheme retrieves the hidden timestamp column.

2-25. (Cancelled)

26. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the timestamp value corresponding to a given row of data in the table is automatically updated each time data in the given row has been modified.

27-30. (Cancelled)